

Virginia Preschool Initiative
Guidelines for the Virginia Preschool Initiative Application
2010-2011

Title of Program:

Virginia Preschool Initiative

Issued to:

Commonwealth of Virginia City Managers, County Administrators and Division Superintendents

Issuing Agency:

Virginia Department of Education
Office of Elementary Instruction
101 North 14th Street, 24th floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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Virginia Lottery Funds

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Fax the certification page by May 15, 2010, to:

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VPI Guidelines:

The guidelines may be downloaded at:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/early_childhood/preschool_initiative/guidelines.pdf

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Program Overview

In January 1994, the Commission on Equity in Public Education adopted and endorsed four major programs as the core elements in their recommendations to the 1994 General Assembly. The recommendations, subsequently adopted by the General Assembly, focused on programs that had been shown to improve educational achievement. A preschool program for at-risk four-year-olds was one of those recommendations.

The 1995 General Assembly, through passage of the Omnibus Education Act (HB2542) and the Appropriation Act, reinforced all components of the 1994 package and provided for expansion of the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI). As of 2005-2006, state funds are available to provide comprehensive preschool programs to 100 percent of Virginia's at-risk four-year-olds, as defined by VPI funding eligibility, and who are not being served by Head Start.

The 2010 General Assembly approved funding, subject to final approval by the Governor, calculated at an estimated \$6,000 per eligible child, with program costs shared by the state and local governments based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay. In FY 2011, the composite index value is capped at 0.5000 for purposes of calculating the estimated local match requirement for the VPI match.

Completed applications are due by May 15, 2010, through the Department of Education's Single Sign-On for Web Applications System (SSWS). Access to the application for school division personnel should be requested through the school division's SSWS account manager. Programs must operate on a full-day or half-day basis for the entire 2010-2011 school year to receive the full state allocation. For a new program in the first year of implementation only, a program operating less than a full school year will receive state funds on a fractional basis determined by the pro-rata portion of a school year program provided.

The program will comply with the staffing standards required by Section 22.1-199.1C, *Code of Virginia*. The maximum class size will be 18 students. One teacher will be employed for any class of nine students or less. If the average daily membership in any class exceeds nine students but does not exceed 18, a full-time teacher's aide will be assigned to the class.

Scope of Services

The purpose of the grants is to reduce disparities among young children upon formal school entry and to reduce or eliminate those risk factors that lead to early academic failure (see Appendix A).

To obtain state funding, localities must develop a written local plan for programs that includes five services:

1. Quality preschool education;
2. Parental involvement;
3. Comprehensive child health services;
4. Comprehensive social services; and
5. Transportation.

The legislative intent of the initiative is to establish a quality preschool education program for at-risk four-year-olds.

Localities are required to use PALS-PreK for literacy screening during the fall and spring of each school year. The results of PALS-PreK assessments, both fall and spring, must be reported to the PALS office. Due to state budget reductions, the cost for PALS materials and access to the PALS Online Score Entry and Reporting System will become a local responsibility in 2011-2012. This is an allowable expense in the local VPI budget (see Appendix B).

The curriculum must align with *Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning*. The *Foundation Blocks* establish a measurable range of skills and knowledge essential for four-year-olds to be successful in kindergarten. The purpose of the *Foundation Blocks* is to provide early childhood educators a set of comprehensive standards with indicators of success for entering kindergarten derived from scientifically-based research. They reflect a consensus of children's conceptual learning, acquisition of basic knowledge, and participation in meaningful and relevant learning experiences (see Appendix C).

Localities are expected to coordinate resources and funding streams to serve the greatest number of four-year-old children.

Funds will be disbursed by the Department of Education to localities to:

1. establish or expand quality, comprehensive preschool programs in public schools or community sites;
2. purchase quality preschool education programs and services for at-risk four-year-old children from existing providers;
3. expand existing quality programs to serve more children; and
4. upgrade existing programs to meet criteria for comprehensive, quality preschool programs to include new, unserved children.

Programs must provide full-day or half-day and at least school year services. First year programs operating less than a full school year will receive state funds on a fractional basis determined by the pro-rata portion of a school year program provided. Children enrolled in the program must be four years of age on or before September 30 of the school year.

Instructional programs offered by public schools that satisfy compulsory attendance laws or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), vocational child-care programs, and extracurricular activities that are focused on single interests such as, but not limited to, music, drama, art, or foreign languages are exempt from the requirements of the Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers.

Application Requirements

Authorizing legislation requires the chief administrator (city manager or county administrator), in conjunction with the school division superintendent, to identify a lead agency within the locality prior to submitting a proposal application on or before May 15, 2010.

Applicants must:

1. Demonstrate willingness to provide a quality preschool education program that conforms to the guidelines and criteria outlined in Appendices A-D;

2. Demonstrate collaboration and coordination with community agencies and groups identified by the lead agency as necessary for the successful delivery of comprehensive services to the children and their families;
3. Develop and utilize selection criteria based on the community's definition of at-risk. (Appendix A provides information on risk factors that may be used); and
4. Complete a grant application and submit it to the Department of Education by May 15, 2010.

Local Match Requirements

The Appropriation Act states that a local match of funds, based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay, is required to receive state funds for this program. In FY 2011, the composite index value is capped at 0.5000 for purposes of calculating the estimated local match requirement for the VPI match.

Defining a Qualifying Program

For the purpose of this initiative, a qualifying program is one that is supported through local dollars and meets, or can meet, the criteria for a quality preschool program for at-risk four-year-old children in the 2010-2011 school year.

State dollars may be used to:

1. Upgrade, complement, or expand an existing locally funded program to meet quality criteria;
2. Complement or expand a Title I or Head Start program to serve additional children; or
3. Establish a new program to serve additional children.

Local Funds

Cash Contributions

Cash contributions are defined as local dollars that are:

1. In a program that meets, or can meet the criteria for a quality preschool program for at-risk four-year-old children in school year 2010-2011; and/or
2. New dollars, which are used to implement a program in the 2010-2011 school year that meets the criteria for a quality preschool program for at-risk four-year-old children.

In-Kind Contributions

In-kind contributions are defined as cash outlays that are made by the locality that benefit the program, but are not directly charged to the program. The value of fixed assets cannot be considered as an in-kind contribution. In-kind contributions are:

1. Limited to no more than 25 percent of the total local match requirement;
2. Justified in the program plan as necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient implementation of the program;
3. Verifiable from the recipient's records;
4. Not included as contributions for any other federally-assisted or state-assisted project or program; and
5. Not paid by the federal government or state government under another award.

Coordination of Funds

Localities should coordinate other funding sources in planning programs for four-year-old children. Some sources of funds include federal funds for Title 1, Head Start programs, and child-care subsidy programs.

Local plans must provide clear methods of service coordination for the purpose of reducing the per child cost for the service, increasing the number of at-risk children served and/or extending services for the entire year. Examples of these include, but are not limited to:

1. **Wraparound services** combine funds such as child-care subsidy dollars, administered by local social service agencies, with dollars for quality preschool education programs.
2. **Wrapout services** use grant funds to provide health, social services, and transportation within a setting that currently provides quality preschool education (e.g., child-care settings or schools).
3. **Expansion of services** uses grant funds to purchase placements within existing programs, such as Head Start, which provide comprehensive services to at-risk four-year-old children.

Using Appendices A-D to Complete the Application

Appendices A-D refers to information regarding the requirements of a quality preschool program and the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

Appendix A:

Risk Factors, Page 6

Appendix B:

PALS-PreK, page 7

Appendix C:

Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning, Page 8

Appendix D:

Site Visit Instrument, Page 9

Appendix A

Risk Factors

Localities will develop selection criteria based on their definition of at-risk. Listed below are sample factors that have been identified as possible risk factors.

1. The child lives in poverty.
2. The child is homeless.
3. The child's parents or guardians are school dropouts, have limited education, or are chronically ill.
4. The child's family is under stress as evidenced by poverty, episodes of violence, crime, underemployment, unemployment, homelessness, or incarceration.
5. The child has health or developmental problems including, but not limited to, developmental delays, low birth weight, or substance abuse.
6. The child is an English language learner.

Appendix B

Use of PALS-PreK

All Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) programs are required to screen children with PALS-PreK in fall and spring and submit scores to the PALS office.

Due to state budget reductions, the cost for PALS materials and access to the PALS Online Score Entry and Reporting System will become a local responsibility in 2011-2012. This is an allowable expense in the local VPI budget. If the locality already purchased a PALS-PreK Teacher Set for the classroom, the per pupil cost would be about \$4.00. If in the future, the locality starts a new program, the Teacher Set would need to be purchased. Then, the per pupil cost would be about \$7.00. Please contact the PALS office at 1-888-882-7257 to purchase materials and establish an online account. The PALS office Web site can be found at: <http://pals.virginia.edu>.

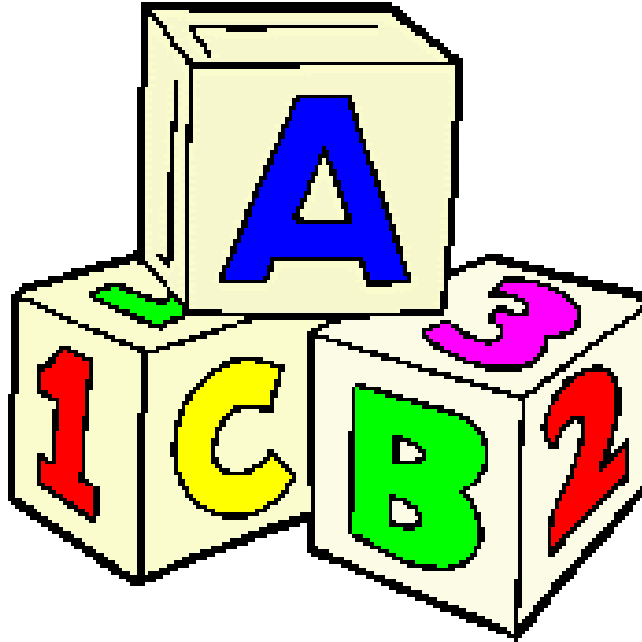
Early diagnostic assessments are a useful tool to ensure immediate intervention for children identified of being at-risk of reading failure.

With support from the Virginia Preschool Initiative, the University of Virginia developed the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening instrument for pre-kindergarten students (PALS-PreK) and established a Web site for preschool teachers that link the results of the assessment with suggested ideas for classroom activities and instruction.

The PALS-PreK instrument assesses rhyme awareness, upper and lower case alphabet knowledge, beginning sound, verbal memory, print knowledge, concept of word, and name writing. Descriptions of each of the PALS-PreK tasks are available on the Web site.

Appendix C

Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning may be found at the following Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/early_childhood/preschool_initiative/foundationblocks.pdf



Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds

Literacy
Mathematics
Science
History and Social Science
Physical and Motor Development
Personal and Social Development

Prepared by
Office of Elementary Instructional Services
Virginia Department of Education

2007

Appendix D

VIRGINIA PRESCHOOL INITIATIVE SITE VISIT INSTRUMENT

LOCALITY _____

Requirement	Is there sufficient documentation that this requirement is being met?	Documentation	Comments or action taken (or to be taken) to fulfill requirements and/or improve in areas of concern. Include timeline for completion.
1. The locality will provide a high quality comprehensive preschool program for at-risk four-year-olds not served by Head Start.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Curriculum Name: _____	-Curriculum must be research-based, comprehensive, integrated across all domains -Professional development plan for current year -Lesson plans -Classroom observation by consultant	
2. The program will align preschool curriculum with <i>Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Scope and sequence of curriculum -Documentation of alignment from locality or publisher	
3. PALS-PreK will be used as a literacy screening in the fall and spring of each year. All results will be reported to the PALS office in the fall and in the spring.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Documentation that fall and spring scores have been reported to the PALS office.	
4. The program will maintain a maximum group size of 18 children with a child/staff ratio of 9:1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Class roster	

Requirement	Is there sufficient documentation that this requirement is being met?	Documentation	Comments or action taken (or to be taken) to fulfill requirements and/or improve in areas of concern. Include timeline for completion.
5. Programs not located in public schools will comply with the <i>Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-License from social services	
6. Children served will reach their fourth birthday on or before September 30th.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Student records or class roster with birth dates	
7. The program will be half-day (3 hrs.) or full-day (6 hrs.) and at least school-year (180 days).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-School calendar -Class schedule	
8. The locality will develop and use criteria for eligibility.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Eligibility criteria form -Rank listing of students	
9. Program personnel will have the appropriate professional credentials for the program site.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Copy of licensure for teachers	
10. The locality will develop a written local plan. The plan will include a description of these services: educational program, parent involvement, health services, social services, and transportation. Please attach a copy of the budget to the plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Detailed local plan to include each required component	
11. No participation fees will be charged to families	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Budget	

Requirement	Is there sufficient documentation that this requirement is being met?	Documentation	Comments or action taken (or to be taken) to fulfill requirements and/or improve in areas of concern. Include timeline for completion.
12. The required local match will be met. At least 75 percent of the local match will be cash and no more than 25 percent will be in-kind.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Budget summary -Budget breakout	
13. State funds and local match funds will be used only for educational personnel and program requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Budget breakout	
14. The locality will maintain a steering committee to coordinate with schools, child care providers, local social services agency, Head Start, local health department, and other groups identified by the lead agency.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-List of committee members and agency they represent -Dates of meetings or agendas or minutes/ notes from meetings	

Signed - Virginia Preschool Initiative Consultant

Date

Signed - Local VPI Program Representative

Date